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Review of *Confronting Racism: The Problem and the Response*.

Jennifer L. Eberhardt and Susan T. Fiske (Eds.). Reviewed by Eric Swank, Morehead State University.

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capitalism as the culture's political economy and use ideology to advance its mission. This requires a nuanced appreciation of conservatism in all its variations.

From this perspective, there are many opportunities to advance social justice, even if the political climate is conservative. Rather than conclude the book abruptly with a summary of the 1996 welfare reform act, Ginsberg could speculate about future directions in social policy that represent a congruence between values of social work and conservatism. Such speculation serves an important function: it invites debate about the future of social policy. By way of illustration, during the 1980s conservative think tanks proposed and debated such innovations as establishing urban enterprise zones, attacking behavioral poverty by making receipt of welfare contingent on behavior, and privatizing Social Security. At the time these were radical suggestions; to the chagrin of liberals they are now central to discussions of social policy.

Ginsberg's book is an overdue addition to the literature; with luck it will be up-dated in future editions. Toward that end there are numerous flaws in the book that could be cleaned-up by a good editing. The manuscript is cluttered with heads and sub-heads, many of which are unnecessary. Extensive quotations from *Losing Ground* and the *Contract with America* could be shortened and followed by critical assessment; the research literature on making receipt of welfare contingent on specific behaviors is extensive and warrants an overview. The author of *The Triumph of Conservatism* is Gabriel Kolko. Finally, on page 105, it is unclear whether the four social policy principles I propose apply to liberalism or neoliberalism—it is the former. These may seem to be small matters, but they unnecessarily diminish the timely message of a substantive scholar.

David Stoesz

Virginia Commonwealth University

Jennifer L. Eberhardt and Susan T. Fiske (Eds.), *Confronting Racism: The Problem and the Response*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1998. \$29.50 papercover.

With the title of *Confronting Racism*, one might conclude that the book has an activist or applied slant. However, this impression

would be incorrect. Instead the compilation contains twelve empirical papers which are written by social psychologists. With this preponderance of psychologists, most chapters focus on the attitudes of individual actors. However, these works are not your typical psychological documents. In parting from a depoliticized notion of the self, the studies situate racial attitudes within the organizational contexts that foster an unequal distribution of power (i.e., the courts, universities, churches).

While all chapters have their merits, I found the section by John Dovidio and Samuel Gaernter the most simulating. When utilizing surveys, these authors established that most White Americans see themselves as unprejudiced people. On the other hand, most Anglos report bouts of uneasiness, discomfort, or ambivalence when they are in the presence of other racial groups. Hence, many Caucasians practice a form of "aversion racism." That is, many White's try to avoid interactions with minorities and exit interracial settings as soon as possible. Furthermore, in racially mixed settings they express superficial or perfunctory commitments to equality while condemnations and derogatory depictions are vented in their homogenized kin groups. Hence, the authors argue that a large percentage of Whites try to seem racially progressive in public, but act on racial resentments in groups that reinforce their derisive and antagonistic sentiments (making unsavory discriminatory practices hidden from the public stage).

In another chapter, David Sears shows how these closeted animosities encroach on policy debates. In using polls to address the "implementation gap," Sears shows that Americans abstractly think that it is improper to discriminate against a person of other races. However, whites are generally resistant to social programs that try to mitigate unjust racial practices. That is, a large segment of Whites give lip service to equality as they oppose governmental policies which try to counter inequities (i.e., Affirmative Action, school busing, bilingual education). Hence, whites seem to like equality as long as there are no systematic efforts to achieve such a goal.

In later chapters, several authors show how racism effects minority members. In incorporating attribution theory, Crocker and Quinn examine the relationships between reference group types and self esteem. In effect, they argue that the Black and Asian

college students who idealize white worldviews have lower self concepts than minorities who prioritize in-group perspectives. In a thought piece, Murrell provides a typology of possible behavioral responses to racial paternalism. In problematizing the notion of a single self, Murrell describes how people deal with multiple racial statuses and many forms of "double consciousness" (i.e., Mexican-Americans transverse dominant WASPian venues, Hispanic social spaces, and Chicano subcultures). Next, Steele delineates the ways in intellectual stereotypes mar minority students. While rehashing both familiar and innovative independent variables, Steele concluded that minority students are resilient to negative expectations when exams or class assignments carry little consequences. Conversely, the portrayal of the "stupid minority" seems to hinder performances when students fear sanctions for some low standardized scores (i.e., high school exit exams or the SAT).

The quality of the pieces seemed to vary immensely. A couple of the works offered somewhat superficial literature reviews. These glossy analytical pieces either tried to cover too much material (i.e., addressing the history of U.S. court systems in four paragraphs) or condensed comprehensive theories into two-sentenced snippets (i.e., the theories of Freud, Allport, Fanon, and Blauner were reduced to single sentences in some cases). On the other hand, the majority of the empirical papers present some rigor and veracity. When using the deductive mode of inquiry, authors selected randomly generated opinion polls. Furthermore, some papers used multiple data sets and refreshingly displayed the actual survey items. Accordingly, even with these strengths the papers showed the common pitfalls of survey research—many of the measures seemed suspect, causation was seen as linear, and the nuances of individual thought were reduced into comparisons of means scores and beta weights.

Hence the value of this book lies on the goals of the reader. With the sterile prose and cryptic language of quantitative work, most of the paper's seem inappropriate for all but a few undergraduate students. Similarly, readers who prefer ethnographic accounts or insights into building an antiracist mobilization will not be pleased. However, *Confronting Racism* can be a blessing for some readers. The book could function as a primer for scholars

who want to explore some recent innovations in psychological theories. And on a methodological note, some of the novel scales and indexes that can be replicated in future studies.

Eric Swank

Morehead State University

Dorothy M. Brown and Elizabeth McKeown, *The Poor Belong to Us: Catholic Charities and American Welfare*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998. \$45.00 hardcover.

The current antagonism against social welfare is deeply rooted in the nineteenth century. Contemporary quarrels are remarkably similar to arguments used at that time and, in fact, very little is being said that is new. As recent passage of the 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act - euphemistically referred to as "welfare reform" legislation - reveals, substantial numbers of people in the United States continue to look with distrust and even abhorrence upon impoverished people and the system designed to provide them with minimal assistance. Nineteenth century judgments about immigrants flooding our borders in search of fortune and burdening us with needs associated with disease and squalid poverty continue to be revealed in current anti-immigrant legislation. Nineteenth century alarm about increasing juvenile delinquency and crime among those whom Charles Loring Brace referred to as the "dangerous classes" who are a menace to society continues to be revealed in a growing attitude of zero tolerance of youth who commit crimes. This is illustrated by the current focus on harsher punishments, including incarceration of youth with adults, capital punishment at younger ages, and holding parents responsible for the behavior of their children.

Modern day reformers who challenge the regressive direction our country seems to be headed often do so with arguments that invoke the needs of innocent children. Similarly, reformers of the nineteenth century often invoked the interests of the children. In fact, much of the history of American welfare can be written in terms of attempts to save the children of the poor from the negative effects of poverty. *The Poor Belong to Us* is written in just such terms. Historian Dorothy Brown and theologian Elizabeth McKeown analyze the evolution of Catholic Charities between